

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) BENEFITS

Generally, the maximum Federal SSI benefit changes yearly. SSI benefits increased in 2020 because there was an increase in the Consumer Price Index from the third quarter of 2018 to the third quarter of 2019. Effective January 1, 2020 the Federal benefit rate is \$783 for an individual and \$1,175 for a couple.

<https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-eligibility-ussi.htm>

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR SSI?

Anyone who is:

- aged (age 65 or older);

- blind; or

- disabled.

And, who:

- has limited income;

- has limited resources;

- is a U.S. citizen or national, or in one of certain categories of aliens;

In general, an alien who is subject to an active warrant for deportation or removal does not meet the citizenship/alien requirement.

is a resident of one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or the Northern Mariana Islands;

is not absent from the country for a full calendar month or for 30 consecutive days or more;

is not confined to an institution (such as a hospital or prison) at the government's expense;

applies for any other cash benefits or payments for which he or she may be eligible, (for example, pensions, Social Security benefits);

gives SSA permission to contact any financial institution and request any financial records about you;

files an application; and

meets certain other requirements.

WHAT DOES "AGED" MEAN?

"Aged" means age 65 or older.

WHAT IS "BLINDNESS" FOR AN ADULT OR CHILD?

Blindness in our disability programs means:

you have a central visual acuity for distance of 20/200 or less in your better eye with use of a correcting lens; or

you have a visual field limitation in your better eye, such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

If you have a visual impairment, but are not blind according to our rules as defined above, you may still be eligible for SSI benefits on the basis of disability. See the definitions of disability for children and adults below.

WHAT DOES “DISABLED” MEAN FOR A CHILD?

If you are under age 18 we may consider you “disabled” if you have a medically determinable physical or mental impairment, (including an emotional or learning problem) that:

results marked and severe functional limitations; and

can be expected to result in death; or

has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

If you are age 18 or older, the adult definition of disability explained below applies.

See [SSI FOR CHILDREN](#) and [IF YOU ARE DISABLED OR BLIND](#) for more information on the childhood disability evaluation.

WHAT DOES “DISABLED” MEAN FOR AN ADULT?

If you are age 18 or older we may consider you “disabled” if you have a medically determinable physical or mental impairment (including an emotional or learning problem) which:

results in the inability to do any [substantial gainful activity](#);
and

can be expected to result in death; or

has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

SSA is committed to providing benefits quickly to applicants whose medical conditions are so serious that their conditions clearly meet disability standards.

Compassionate Allowances (CAL) are a way to quickly identify diseases and other medical conditions that, by definition, meet Social Security's standards for disability benefits. These conditions primarily include certain cancers, adult brain disorders, and a number of rare disorders that affect children. The CAL initiative helps reduce waiting time to reach a disability determination for individuals with the most serious disabilities. By incorporating cutting-edge technology, the agency can easily identify potential CAL to quickly make decisions. SSA receives information from the public, advocacy groups, comments received from the Social Security and Disability Determination Services communities, counsel from medical and scientific experts, research with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and information received from past public outreach hearings regarding potential CAL conditions. For more information on CAL go to www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances/.

WHAT DOES "LIMITED INCOME" INCLUDE?

Income, for the purposes of SSI includes:

- money you earn from work;

- money you receive from other sources, such as Social Security benefits, workers compensation, unemployment benefits, the Department of Veterans Affairs, friends or relatives; and

- free food or shelter.

We do not count all income for SSI, but income that we do count reduces your SSI benefit amount. For more information, see [SSI INCOME](#).

WHAT ARE "LIMITED RESOURCES"?

Resources, for the purposes of SSI, are things you own such as:

cash;

bank accounts, stocks, U.S. savings bonds;

land;

vehicles;

personal property;

life insurance; and

anything else you own that could be converted to cash and used for food or shelter.

We do not count the value of all of your resources for SSI. See [SSI RESOURCES](#).

The SSI limits for resources that we do count are:

Individual/Child — \$2,000

Couple — \$3,000

CITIZEN / NON-CITIZEN STATUS

To get SSI, you must be:

a citizen or national of the United States; or

a non-citizen who meets the alien eligibility criteria under the 1996 legislation and its amendments.

WHEN IS A NON-CITIZEN ELIGIBLE FOR SSI?

Beginning August 22, 1996, most non-citizens must meet two requirements to be eligible for SSI:

the non-citizen must be in a [qualified alien](#) category, and
meet a [condition](#) that allows qualified aliens to get SSI benefits.

A non-citizen must also meet all of the other requirements for SSI eligibility, including the limits on income, resources, etc.

WHO IS A "QUALIFIED ALIEN"?

There are seven categories of non-citizens who are qualified aliens. You are a "qualified alien" if the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) says you are in one of these categories:

1. Lawfully admitted for Permanent Residence (LAPR) in the U.S., including "Amerasian immigrant" as defined in P.L. 100-202, with a class of admission AM-1 through AM-8;

2. Granted conditional entry under Section

203(a)(7)

of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) as in effect before April 1, 1980;

3. Paroled into the U.S. under Section

212(d)(5)

of the INA for a period of at least one year;

4. Refugee admitted to the U.S. under Section 207 of the INA;

5. Granted asylum under Section 208 of the INA;

6. Deportation is being withheld under Section

243(h)

of the INA as in effect before April 1, 1997, or removal is being withheld under Section

241(b)(3) of the INA;

7. A "Cuban or Haitian entrant" under Section

501(e)

of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980 or in a status that is to be treated as a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" for SSI purposes.

In addition, you can be a "deemed qualified alien" if, under certain circumstances, you, your child, or your parent has been subjected to battery or extreme cruelty by a family member while in the United States.

UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS IS A "QUALIFIED ALIEN" ELIGIBLE FOR SSI?

If you are in one of the seven "qualified alien" categories listed above, or have been determined to be a "deemed qualified alien" because you have been subjected to battery or extreme cruelty, you may be eligible for SSI benefits if you have limited income and resources and are aged, blind, or disabled and also meet one of the following conditions:

1. You were receiving SSI and lawfully residing in the U.S. on August 22, 1996.
2. You are a Lawfully Admitted for Permanent Residence (LAPR) with 40 qualifying quarters of earnings. Work done by your spouse or parent(s) may also count toward the 40 quarters of earnings, but only for getting SSI.

We cannot count quarters of earnings earned after December 31, 1996, if you, your spouse, or your parent(s) worked or received certain benefits from the U.S. government based on limited income and resources during that period.

IMPORTANT: If you entered the U.S. on or after August 22, 1996, then you may not be eligible for SSI for the first 5 years as a LAPR, even if you have 40 qualifying quarters of earnings.

3. You are currently on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, or you are an honorably discharged veteran and your discharge is not because you are an alien. This condition may also apply if you are the spouse, widow(er), or dependent child of certain U.S. military personnel.

4. You were lawfully residing in the United States on August 22, 1996, **and** you are blind or disabled.
5. You may receive SSI for a maximum of 7 years from the date DHS granted you qualified alien status in one of the following categories, and the status was granted within seven years of filing for SSI:

Refugee admitted to the United States (U.S.) under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA);

Asylee admitted to the U.S. under section 208 of the INA;

Alien whose deportation was withheld under section 243(h) of the INA or whose removal is withheld under section 241(b)(3) of the INA;

Admitted as a "Cuban or Haitian entrant"- as defined under section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980 or in a status that is to be treated as a "Cuban/Haitian entrant" for SSI purposes; or

"Amerasian immigrant" pursuant to P.L. 100-202, with a class admission of AM-1 through AM-8.

EXEMPTION FROM THE AUGUST 22, 1996 LAW FOR CERTAIN NON-CITIZEN INDIANS

Certain categories of non-citizens may be eligible for SSI and are not subject to the August 22, 1996, law. These categories include:

American Indians born in Canada who were admitted to the United States under Section 289 of the INA; or

Non-citizen members of a Federally recognized Indian tribe who fall under Section 4(e) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBLE ALIEN CATEGORIES

Victims of Severe Forms of Human Trafficking: You may be eligible for SSI under certain circumstances if the Department of Health and Human Services' [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) and the Department of Homeland Security determine that you meet the requirements of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

Iraqi/Afghan Special Immigrants: You may also qualify for SSI for a period of seven years if you are an Iraqi or Afghani special immigrant admitted to the United States.

WHAT IS RESIDENCY?

You must:

- Live in one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia or the Northern Mariana Islands, with the intent to continue living within these geographic limits; or

Be a child living with a parent in the military service assigned to permanent duty ashore anywhere outside of the U.S.; or

See the SSI Spotlight on [Special SSI Rules for Children of Military Personnel Living Overseas](#).

Be a student temporarily abroad for the purpose of conducting studies as part of an educational program.

WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR SSI?

Some examples of who is not eligible for SSI include, but are not limited to:

SOMEONE WHO HAS AN UNSATISFIED FELONY OR ARREST WARRANT

You are ineligible to receive SSI benefits for any month during which you have an unsatisfied felony OR arrest warrant for:

- escape from custody; or

- flight to avoid prosecution or confinement; or

- flight-escape.

In addition, we cannot pay you any retroactive payments if you have one of these unsatisfied felony or arrest warrants. We will hold your retroactive payments until you contact SSA and provide proof that you satisfied the felony or arrest warrant.

SOMEONE WHO IS IN PRISON OR JAIL

If you are receiving SSI and you go to prison or jail, (this also includes correctional institutions, such as detention centers, halfway houses, boot camps, etc. but does not necessarily include home confinement) you are not eligible to receive SSI for any full calendar month you are incarcerated. In addition, we cannot pay any retroactive payments for benefits due before you were incarcerated. We will hold the retroactive payments until you contact SSA and provide proof that you are no longer a prisoner.

Please see our pamphlet, 'What Prisoners Need to Know' or view it online at www.ssa.gov/pubs/10133.html if you want more information about how being in jail or prison affects your SSI benefits.

In most instances, you can apply for SSI benefits and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits several months before you expect to be released from prison or jail. See the SSI spotlight on the [Prerelease Procedure](#).

SOMEONE WHO IS IN A PUBLIC INSTITUTION

If you are in any institution for a whole month that is run by a Federal, State or local government, you are not eligible for SSI for that month unless an exception applies such as residence in a public emergency shelter for the homeless or publicly operated community residence. If you expect to leave the institution, you may use the prerelease procedure described in the SSI spotlight on the [Prerelease Procedure](#).

SOMEONE WHO GIVES AWAY RESOURCES

If you give away a resource or sell it for less than it is worth in order to reduce your resources below the SSI resource limit, you may be ineligible for SSI for up to 36 months.

See [SSI RESOURCES](#) and the SSI Spotlight on [Transfers of Resources](#).

SOMEONE WHO IS A NON-CITIZEN SSI RECIPIENT WHO FAILS TO MEET THE ALIEN STATUS REQUIREMENTS

If you are receiving SSI as a non-citizen and you lose your status as an eligible alien, you are not eligible to receive SSI. For example, your SSI will stop if you lose your status as a [qualified alien](#) because there is an active warrant for your deportation or removal from the U.S.

If you are a [qualified alien](#) but you no longer meet one of the [conditions](#) that allow SSI eligibility for [qualified aliens](#), then your SSI benefits will stop.

SOMEONE WHO IS AN SSI RECIPIENT WHO IS ABSENT FROM THE U.S. FOR A FULL CALENDAR MONTH **OR FOR 30 CONSECUTIVE DAYS OR MORE**

Except for certain students temporarily abroad for study purposes or a child of military parents stationed overseas, an individual is not eligible for SSI benefits for any month during all of which he or she has been outside the U.S. Once an individual has been outside the U.S. for 30 consecutive days or longer, he or she must be back in the U.S. for 30 consecutive days to be eligible for SSI benefits.